

this country. I think it is a moment when the leadership class of this country should be amplifying an optimistic, can-do message that I think is in accord with the values of Virginians and the values of Americans. I suspect that that kind of a message—the acknowledgment of the difficult reality but the foundation being laid for the beginnings of an American comeback after 2 tough years—is the message that we are going to hear from President Biden tonight.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

SUPPORTING REOPENING THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL BUILDING AND SENATE OFFICE BUILDINGS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Mr. HAGERTY. Madam President, I rose in this Chamber 2 weeks ago to again urge the Senate to reopen the U.S. Capitol and to reopen the Senate office buildings. At that time, Democrats objected to my resolution in support of reopening. Two weeks later, it has become even more clear that the American public is tired of government mandates and of COVID shutdowns.

Democrats have exploited the pandemic to execute a power grab over American life—a power grab that allows Democrats to dictate whether children can attend schools, whether Americans can keep their jobs and operate their businesses, and how elections are conducted. These Big Government lockdowns and mandates have caused irreparable damage that will be felt for generations to come. As we move ahead, we mustn't lose sight of this lesson.

On the bright side, even the Biden administration is seeing the poll numbers, and they are adjusting the science accordingly. On Friday, the CDC changed its guidance once again. Now indoor masks are not recommended for most Americans. Masks are no longer required on either side of the Capitol Building. Why, even Washington, DC, has opened up and lifted its mask mandate. Amazingly, all of this happened just in time for the State of the Union Address.

The only science that is being followed here is the political science, but, thankfully, America is returning to normal. Americans everywhere are safely living their lives—going to work and school, visiting stores, attending events, and gathering with their families and their friends. They shouldn't have to know somebody in order to visit their Representatives, to take a tour of the Capitol, to get into this building.

It is time for the lockdown on democracy to come to an end. Today, I am once again asking my colleagues to rejoin reality and reopen the Capitol to those to whom it belongs—the American people.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules

and Administration be discharged from further consideration and that the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 512.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 512) supporting reopening the United States Capitol Building and Senate Office Buildings to the American people.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. HAGERTY. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 512) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 15, 2022, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. HAGERTY. Madam President, I am glad that the Senate has agreed to my resolution to reopen the Capitol, and I urge the House of Representatives to pass a very similar resolution that was introduced in that body so that all parts of the Capitol Complex are open to the American people.

I also stand ready to work with my colleagues and with the Capitol Police to implement this resolution so that we can welcome the American people back into their Capitol as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 2022—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

H.R. 3076

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, last night, the Senate came together for the American people and overwhelmingly voted to move forward on historic, bipartisan, bicameral, and long-overdue reforms that will help ensure the stability and the long-term success of the U.S. Postal Service.

The Postal Service is one of our Nation's oldest and most trusted institutions. It serves as a critical lifeline for millions of Americans, including seniors and veterans in rural communities who expect the Postal Service to deliver vital mail, including supplies and medications.

However, for more than 15 years, this public service and its dedicated workers have been hindered by burdensome financial requirements. The need to quickly pass these balanced reforms, which are broadly supported by the American people, has become increasingly urgent.

One persistent burden has been a requirement to prefund every single cent of healthcare benefits that every single

postal worker employee will use when they eventually retire, no matter how far off that may be. This is something that no business in America is required to do, and for good reason. It makes no practical sense, and it has imposed an enormous cost on the Postal Service that has threatened their ability to provide reliable and timely delivery.

In recent years, we have seen firsthand how burdensome policies have driven the Postal Service to resort to harsh measures to cut costs and, as a result, compromise delivery service. We must act now to set this critical institution on a sustainable financial footing by passing the Postal Service Reform Act.

This bipartisan, commonsense legislation will save the Postal Service more than \$49 billion in the next 10 years by eliminating the aggressive prefunding requirement for retiree health benefits and by integrating postal retirees' healthcare with Medicare.

These changes will help ensure the Postal Service, which is self-sustaining and does not receive taxpayer funding, can continue serving the people and avoid making severe cuts down the line that would impact millions of Americans. These reforms will also require the Postal Service to deliver 6 days a week so it can continue serving as a critical lifeline for countless communities that need timely delivery of their essential needs.

This legislation will also make the Postal Service more transparent and accountable to the American people by making weekly local performance data publicly available online, enabling every single community to see exactly how the Postal Service is performing in their area.

I introduced this legislation in the Senate last year and have worked hand in hand with Ranking Member ROB PORTMAN from Ohio, as well as Chairwoman MALONEY and Ranking Member COMER on the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, to craft this bill.

Last month, the House passed this legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support. Last night, we saw this body advance it with significant bipartisan support once again. Now the Senate has a historic opportunity to move this legislation forward.

I am proud to have helped secure significant bipartisan support for our Senate companion bill, with a total of 14 Democratic and 14 Republican cosponsors backing the legislation.

Together, we can finally, after more than 15 years, pass this commonsense, bipartisan legislation to set the Postal Service on a stable financial foot and bring it into the future. We can support our dedicated and hard-working postal employees, as well as the customers whom they serve. We can set the Postal Service up for success so that families and small businesses, veterans, seniors, and all Americans can continue to rely on this critical public

service, as they have for generations. We can show the American people this body can set aside partisanship and work hand in hand to improve their lives.

Every single day that we delay will just hurt the Postal Service. We must pass these urgently needed reforms. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation and pass it swiftly so that we can ensure the long-term success of this treasured institution and the essential role it plays in the lives of every single American.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I rise today in support of the legislation that my colleague from Michigan just talked about. This is H.R. 3076, the Postal Service Reform Act. What it really is, though, is ensuring that the post office works, that it works for the constituents whom I represent and people all around the country.

Unfortunately, right now, the post office is in trouble. It is in dire need of reform, and if we don't do it, we are going to have big problems. The post office just had its 15th consecutive annual net loss in 2021, and they projected they are going to be insolvent in the next few years unless we make these reforms and other reforms as well that can be made by the post office itself. In fact, they project a 10-year loss of \$160 billion if we just continue with the status quo.

The reality is that the Postal Service is delivering less and less first-class mail. We are all online. We are not sending as many letters as we used to. Yet there are more and more addresses that they deliver to because more and more people want to get the mail they do deliver, the packages, the direct mail, and so on. So it doesn't work. It is a recipe for ruin if we don't adjust to the new reality and make some necessary changes.

Last year, Senator PETERS and I did introduce the legislation he talked about. We had 26 cosponsors, equally divided between Republicans and Democrats. We kept this bipartisan from the start. In fact, I would even say we tried to keep it nonpartisan. What could be more nonpartisan than trying to save the post office? Everybody cares about the post office and wants to be sure it is working well and working efficiently. It is not a partisan issue; it is of importance to all Americans—young, old, urban, rural, everybody.

I hear a lot about it back home from my constituents. A constituent from Butler County, OH, wrote me recently and said:

My father, a veteran of the Vietnam war, has COPD and is 70 years old. He receives his lifesaving medication through the mail. My father can't breathe without his daily inhaler.

We have to be sure the post office works for him.

A constituent from Montgomery County wrote:

As a disabled veteran, I need to vote by mail.

We have the ability to vote by mail in Ohio. It is no-fault absentee. But it requires the Postal Service to work, right? It doesn't work well if the ballot is late and is not counted.

A constituent from Richland County, OH, wrote:

The post office is essential to millions of Americans, including seniors and veterans who depend on it for medications, small business owners who are already struggling.

Everybody. Everybody.

Putting the Postal Service on sound financial footing cannot be accomplished through an act of Congress alone. This is not just about passing a law here. We are going to do that. We had a good vote last night, and I think we will get more people supporting it, I hope, as we go through the week. But it is also about reforms that the post office is going to make itself.

The current Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, has embarked on an ambitious plan to transform the Postal Service by finding efficiencies, including transforming existing capabilities to more efficiently meet the needs of the American people. He is taking on a 10-year plan to make certain changes to make the post office more efficient, but he has made clear to us that he needs the financial space to do that. He needs some headroom here by us making some important changes here in Congress.

We have a role to play too. This is what we do:

First, we eliminate a burdensome and unique prefunding requirement for retiree health benefits. Congress mandated this back in 2006 for current employees, regardless of age. That has crippled the Postal Service financially. Prefunding of retiree health benefits is not something that anybody else has to do. It is really uniquely the post office. The Federal Government does not do that. The private sector does not do that. In fact, very few private sector entities, of course, offer retiree health benefits. They rely on Medicare. So the Federal Government doesn't do it. The private sector doesn't do it. Why is the post office doing it? That is a good question. We are just trying to bring the post office in line with what everybody else is doing with regard to retiree health benefits.

Second, it requires Postal Service employees who are retiring—who have been paying into Medicare their entire career, by the way—to actually enroll in Medicare Part B and Part D. Everybody is in Part A, but about 25 percent of postal employees are not in Part B. Instead, they rely on the Federal employee health benefit plan, which is far more expensive.

This includes the ability for these post office retirees to get into Medicare Advantage. That is very important to me. So just like happens under current opportunities to enroll in Medicare Advantage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program,

they would be able to use the Medicare Advantage Program, which I like. It is kind of a wraparound program that gives you more opportunities for more options and benefits. It is more like a private sector plan. A lot of my constituents in Ohio like it and use it.

Currently, again, about 25 percent of postal employees don't enroll in Medicare even though they are eligible for it. Again, they paid their HI payroll tax, the HI tax you see on your paycheck. This means the Postal Service is currently paying higher premiums for FEHB than other public or private sector employers who require Medicare. This is a big savings for them.

Third, it requires the Postal Service to maintain its current standard of 6-day-a-week delivery through an integrated delivery network of mail and packages. This was important to a lot of my colleagues—particularly those representing rural areas—that they keep this 6-day-a-week delivery. It is important to the guy who is from Butler County who gets his COPD medication through the mail. So it requires the post office to continue to do that even while finding other efficiencies.

In terms of the integrated delivery network of mail and packages together, it underscores through a rule of construction that this has no impact on existing rules governing how the Postal Service attributes costs between packages and mail.

Let me repeat that. We provide for an integrated delivery system of mail and packages, and that makes sense. If you are going to deliver mail to somebody, you should also be delivering the package, right? That is much more efficient. But we say that this has no impact on existing rules governing how the Postal Service attributes costs between packages and mail.

This is important to me because this makes sure that the private sector will not be subject to unfair competition.

In addition to doing all of these things, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bill will result in a little more than \$1 billion in savings in outlays and \$458 million in savings in direct spending.

The bottom line is, the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, the nonpartisan group up here in Congress, has looked at this and said there is going to be a \$1.5 billion savings to the taxpayer because of this legislation—\$1.5 billion savings to the taxpayer.

Because it makes sense, this legislation received strong bipartisan support when it was taken up in the House of Representatives. In fact, it was passed by a vote of 342 to 92. Not much gets passed with those kinds of big bipartisan numbers these days. Republicans and Democrats alike looked at this and said: You know, the post office is in trouble. We have to do something.

Some say: Well, this may not be perfect. Well, it is not perfect. Nothing is around here. But it is a whole lot better than the alternative, and it does get the post office back on track.

Again, along with the reforms that are being undertaken at the Postal Service itself, this legislation gives them the financial breathing room they need to be able to save the post office.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill. Let's put the post office in a position to succeed and provide those essential services that small businesses, veterans, and rural constituents rely on so much.

I appreciate working with my colleague Senator PETERS on this over time to find consensus. Both sides had to make concessions to get to this point. We have ended up with a good bill. Let's pass this bill and ensure that the post office is healthy for our constituents moving forward.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:44 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 2022—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, as the Senate process on the Postal Service Reform Act is underway, I want to rise today to highlight the daily impact the U.S. Postal Service has on folks back home, particularly in rural Kansas.

Many Americans rely upon the U.S. Postal Service. When a special occasion arises, they will send a card to a loved one. And while receiving a letter or a card, a gift in the mail—instead of a text message or email these days—brings lots of people lots of joy and a connection to people, the U.S. Postal Service holds a very different role for so many Kansans living in rural America.

Its services are ingrained in the daily routines and lifestyles of our rural communities. Men and women of our communities gather at the post office. They see their friends and neighbors when they go to get their mail at the mailbox at the post office. Everything from celebrating birthdays and weddings to supporting the town's economy, to even providing lifesaving assistance during a natural disaster or global pandemic revolves around the post office.

Rod Holub, former president of the Kansas State Association of Letter Carriers, reminded me of a supercell tornado that hit Manhattan, KS, in June 2008. There was no electronic communication available, and the only reliable way to communicate was the post office. One of the first people allowed in the affected area was Rod, the postal carrier.

Kansans living in Manhattan at the time have told me stories of how Rod

assured every family that they would still be able to connect to their mail service since electronic communications were down, and it would be a while before they could be restored. Insurance claim information and legal documents were going to be vital in rebuilding their lives, and Rod ensured safe, secure, and timely delivery of those documents.

Similar situations occurred in the communities of Reading and Greensburg when natural disasters cut off their access to the local post office. When natural disasters wreak havoc in Kansas, a priority in the aftermath is helping to ensure postal operations resume quickly for Kansans who lost almost everything. In both of the cases of Greensburg and Reading, the Postal Service worked quickly with the communities to reestablish mail service and provide a method of communication to rebuild from the destruction.

It is often a neglected fact that the U.S. Postal Service letter carriers are the protective eyes and ears of the neighborhood, often going the extra mile to aid a customer in need of assistance. One such story occurred when a Kansas letter carrier discovered a customer confined to a wheelchair in the heat of summer and without air-conditioning, a fan, or a ramp to get in and out of their home. The Kansas letter carrier took it upon herself to rally the neighbors who all provided the customer with a window AC unit, a fan, and had a ramp built.

Much of the benefits of the Postal Service Reform Act will be halting the service reductions Kansans have been subjected to for the past 15 years. Dozens of post offices across the State have closed and multiple rural processing facilities in Dodge City, Colby, Hays, Salina, Topeka, and Fort Scott were shuttered. Now, if you live in many parts of Western Kansas or Eastern or Southeast Kansas, your mail is processed someplace far away—North Platte, NE; Amarillo, TX. There are only two processing facilities that remain in our State. The impact of these closures and consolidations disproportionately affect rural Kansans in both service reductions and lost jobs.

Congressional action on the postal reform legislation will allow the U.S. Postal Service to continue serving rural America without fear of imminent service reductions that will further isolate rural communities. The solution to the post office's financial circumstances can't simply be eliminating service, reducing service. To ensure that the U.S. Postal Service maintains its vital services, I urge my colleagues to support and vote for the Postal Service Reform Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3652

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I rise today to discuss Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and in a moment, I am going to ask unanimous consent to pass some

legislation which has been kicking around here for a while and is way overdue.

What we have witnessed over the past 5 days is a flagrant act of unprovoked aggression perpetrated by Russia against Ukraine.

The world we are living in today is different from the one we lived in last week. For months, I, along with my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle, have watched the conflict inch closer and closer.

The intelligence community provided accurate and clear information on the situation, and for this, I commend them. I also commend them for releasing the vast majority, if not all of the information they had in an attempt to deter Putin. That didn't work. However, there is no question, we should have taken action sooner rather than later, and it is time to do so now in a much more aggressive fashion.

In preparation for this invasion, many of my Senate colleagues and I drafted hard-hitting sanctions and called repeatedly for more lethal assistance for months. We used all leverage at our disposal to pressure the administration to take sufficient action, but despite our actions, our efforts, it didn't happen. Certainly, some military assistance was provided, but it is hard not to think that if we had expedited Javelin and Stinger deliveries last year and let our allies move more equipment sooner, the Ukrainians would be making the Russians pay a much higher price.

Right now, Ukraine desperately needs the support of the international community. It needs us to sanction Russia, to punish its government for this unjustified attack. These Ukrainian heroes need more weapons, armor, and supplies to fight back the Russian invaders and preserve the lives of its population.

The Biden administration was well-intentioned in pursuit of a diplomatic resolution for Russia's aggression, but the administration was wrong to oppose our congressional efforts to impose even tougher sanctions that were essential to make our deterrence credible. President Biden made it clear that maximum economic sanctions would only come after Putin invaded. The administration's promise that the threat of sanctions would be enough to deter Putin was a mistake. Look where we are now. Diplomacy has failed. The invasion has happened.

While sanctions have now been levied on Russia, there is still room for more robust sanctions in order get Putin to pull back. I have always said I am all in on all of the above when it comes to Ukraine and Russia.

I am happy to support legislation proposed by my Democrat colleagues, but the Senate must take the lead and mandate the massive economic sanctions that President Biden and his officials committed to.

The NYET Act, which I introduced 2 weeks ago with numerous cosponsors,